



PLANNING COMMISSION SYNOPSIS

Thursday, April 23, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Nordstrom called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Bloomington Civic Plaza.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Nordstrom, Willette, Fischer, Bennett, Goodrum

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Spiess, Batterson

STAFF PRESENT: Markegard, Fields, Centinario, Schmidt, Marohn, Roberts, Hiller

Chairperson Nordstrom led the attendees in the reciting of *The Pledge of Allegiance*.

ITEM 1 6:02 p.m.

CASE:	8926A-15
APPLICANT:	Park Place Bloomington, LLC
LOCATION:	10700 France Avenue
REQUESTS:	Major revision to final development plan to modify an approved one phase development to a two phase development

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Markegard explained the applicant has requested this item be continued to the June 11, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/Fischer, S/Willette: In Case 8490A-15, at the request of the applicant, I move to continue the item to the June 11, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEM 2
6:05 p.m.

CASE:	9930AB-15
APPLICANT:	Seven Hills Preparatory Academy
LOCATION:	6100 West 110 th Street
REQUEST:	1) Comprehensive Land Use Plan Amendment – Industrial to Quasi-Public (Case 9930B-15); and 2) Rezoning from IP, Industrial Park, to C-4, Freeway Office (Case 9930A-15)

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Markegard explained the City received an email dated April 23, 2015, stating the applicant has withdrawn Cases 9930AB-15 and Case 10000B-15.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/Fischer, S/Goodrum: In Case 9930AB-15, I move to accept the applicant withdrawal per the email communication dated April 23, 2015. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEM 3
6:10 p.m.

APPLICANT:	City of Bloomington
REQUEST:	Consider Adoption of the Alternative Transportation Plan Update

SPEAKING FOR THE APPLICANT:

Mike Centinario, Planner
Amy Marohn, Civil Engineer

SPEAKING FROM THE PUBLIC:

Dennis Porter (10409 Nicollet Circle)
Ann Lenczewski (10306 Humboldt Circle)

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Centinario explained this item was last discussed by the Planning Commission at the January study meeting. Since that time, a public meeting was held to gather input in February and some minor changes have been incorporated into the draft document that was attached in the electronic staff report. He explained Amy Marohn will be presenting the update and are asking for a recommendation to City Council.

Marohn explained the original Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) was adopted in 2008 and since then approximately 30 miles of on road bicycle facilities, about 5 miles of new trails, and about 5 miles of reconstruction of trails have been implemented so it was about time to update the original plan.

Marohn stated the update process began in early 2014 and has a great amount of public input via surveys, open houses, stakeholder meetings, and website comments. The feedback received helped identify gaps in the existing system and helped guide the prioritization plan.

Marohn stated the overall purpose of the ATP is to enhance the quality of life in the City of Bloomington through strategic investments over time in the multi-modal transportation features to meet the needs of individuals and families living, working, and recreating in Bloomington. She explained the plan is made up of three critical elements: the core alternative transportation system, complete streets policy, and neighborhood pedestrian/safe routes to schools program.

Marohn displayed the updated ATP System map explaining the map is very useful to the Engineering Department when identifying which projects need to be done. She displayed a series of slides depicting various maps included in the ATP Update including the ATP System Hierarchy map, existing systems and gaps, priority regional trail connections, and community corridors maps (1-9) and explained how to read and use the maps.

Marohn displayed a graphic depicting the projected costs, ownership, lead, and funding source of the five regional trail segments including: Minnesota River Trail Corridor, Hyland Trail Corridor, Intercity Regional Trail Corridor, Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Corridor, and the CP Rail Corridor. Marohn displayed a graphic depicting Trail Maintenance Costs broken down by type including: on-street sweeping, sweeping, snow and ice removal, mowing clear zones, asphalt crack repair, asphalt edge/patch repair, sealcoating/fog sealing, and signage.

Marohn stated staff is recommending approval of the ATP Update and is looking for Planning Commission action. She stated she is available for questions and comments from the Commission.

Willette asked for clarification on the placement of the I-35W Parallel Route Trail. Marohn explained that the route would be on City streets and run roughly parallel to I-35W. Willette asked for Marohn to comment on the status of the Xcel Corridor Trail. Marohn stated the Xcel Corridor Trail has been removed from the ATP plan. Willette asked Marohn to comment on whether any grants have been received this year for the Safe Routes to School programs. Marohn stated the City is very close and have received top scores on the last applications. She stated she believes the City may be awarded grants for projects near Jefferson and Olson schools.

Goodrum asked Marohn to comment on whether the trails off of roadways are reliant on funding before they are constructed. Marohn stated the City does not have a lot of the tools required for the off-road facilities with our Pavement Management Program (PMP) and so staff looks for other funding sources. There are opportunities to apply for Federal or State funding through grants. The City tries to partner with other agencies as much as possible to provide funding. Goodrum asked if the trail is on the roadway is its construction/maintenance then required to be partnered with a street project. Marohn stated no, and added that a stand-alone project could be built on its own. She stated the City, however, tries to maximize its dollars by partnering with other projects already scheduled.

Dennis Porter introduced himself and stated he is a former Parks & Recreation Commissioner as well as an original member of the Alternative Transportation Task Force. He stated he has worked in the bicycle industry for over 20 years and is currently a manufacturer's sales representative whose territory is the Midwest. He voiced general support for the updated plan and commended the City for striping the bike routes on roadways and believes by doing so it has improved some neighborhood and increased property values. He stated he is glad to see programs like the Safe Routes to School growing and added that providing safe routes to schools will enable children to bike and walk to school rather than parents dropping them off in cars which only adds to congestion on the roads. He stated the main reason he wanted to come and give testimony on this item is the priority of the MN River Valley Corridor. He stated he has been a longtime advocate for the MN River Valley area as well as a long time user and volunteer. He stated he does not believe the MN River Valley Corridor should be part of the ATP. He stated it is a recreational trail, and the DNR will build it as a recreational trail. Many who support the trail support it as a natural trail as it currently is and hope to get some infrastructure improvements like bridges and such, but not a paved trail. This is a natural area along an already threatened major waterway and the track record the DNR has for paved trails along this waterway is not good. Estimates are coming in at \$11 million dollars and as high as \$15 million by estimates from Three Rivers Park District. These costs do not include flood damage. He stated in the last 10 years, there have been 9 major flood events. He stated many bicycle supporters feel this project could endanger other projects down the road. He stated there have already been discussions at the State Legislature on funding maintenance on trails. This trail will surely be a huge maintenance cost and even though the DNR would be responsible for its budget, they cannot fix and maintain the trails they currently have. Classic example is from Chaska to Shakopee, which the DNR is claiming is finished and it is not. It is unrideable in many areas and currently closed. He added the flooding events not only are occurring in the spring, but on rain events and silt is being deposited from the various drain tiles and being deposited downriver. The removal of this silt/debris is expensive and concerning as a bicycle enthusiast and as a taxpayer. He stated he has a petition of almost 3,000 signatures that are against a paved trail and a DNR survey from 2006 revealed that 96 percent prefer a natural trail. The Hennepin County bicycle plan that was just released indicated a bluff trail corridor that run along Auto Club Road and other places that are outside of the flood zone. Porter's recommendation would be to pass a plan with a condition that this would not be a priority and let the DNR figure out how they are going to work this trail. Porter and his group are hoping to support a natural trail which is what the users of the trail support now.

Goodrum asked Porter if his group is opposed to the costs or that there would be a paved trail. Porter stated both. He stated there would be tremendous costs and there has yet to be a study conducted by the

City of Bloomington, DNR, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife to determine who the current users are and their preferences. He stated it seems like it is a slam dunk to those that are planning the trail, but to the users which include a great deal of Bloomington residents, mountain bikers, trail runners, walkers, and dog walkers and these users are predominantly looking for a natural area. The character of this area will certainly change and the questionable sustainability of the trail itself.

Willette commented that he personally sees the value of a paved trail for users who may be handicapped or have limited mobility. He stated he lived a large part of his life in Minneapolis and enjoyed the paved trails all through the city. He asked Porter to comment if an alternative of a trail that would have segments that are paved and other segments that are natural. Porter stated there is enough land area in the Valley to allow ADA access to parts of the Valley, but with the flooding issue and the relying on the DNR for maintenance when they cannot adequately maintain the current trail systems just makes no sense. Willette stated the flood hazard zone does not include the full length of the trail. Porter stated nearly the entire trail from the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge to the Bloomington Ferry Bridge takes most of the damage. Porter stated taxpayer money (DNR) will pay for the maintenance and they are already having a difficult time maintaining their existing trail systems. If the DNR fails to maintain, this trail will be on Bloomington land and taxpayers will have to pick up those costs.

The public hearing was closed via a motion.

Willette stated he is in support of moving the ATP Update as the current plan has many holes in the network and he stated he does not think they are paying enough attention to the amenities that could be along the trails. He voiced support for Safe Routes for Schools and he expressed support for safe routes to the parks so citizens start using them again.

Nordstrom stated he thinks this will be a work-in-progress over a number of years so what is in the plan is probably not going to be exactly what will end up there some thirty years from now. There will be a number of things that come around that will interrupt it or cause reprioritization of segments so it will get ongoing feedback.

Goodrum stated he appreciates all comments made on the item and stated this is a public hearing and all comments made will be documented in the synopsis of the meeting and be forwarded to the City Council. He stated he is in support of the ATP update.

Nordstrom stated this item is tentatively scheduled to be heard at the City Council in late May of 2015.

Ann Lenczewski addressed the Commission at the end of the regular meeting and after the public hearing on this item was closed. She apologized for not being able to testify during the public hearing but explained she wanted to make some comments for the public record. She stated the State Trail is not a City of Bloomington project, but rather a State Trail project that will run through the Minnesota River Valley and through some City owned land. She stated that when completed, the trail will be almost 200 miles long and explained a key segment vital to the trail connection is the Bloomington segment which connects the airport to Bell Plaine. She clarified the State Trail through Bell Plaine is a fully funded project for construction and maintenance costs. She stated the Minnesota River Valley within Bloomington's borders is largely Federal Land with some City owned land and two private parcels. She explained the State Trail will be a natural trail and paved trail (dual trail). She stated many groups have expressed support for a dual trail and is listed as the top priority of the ATP. She stated another piece is the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge (OCAB) which will be breaking ground in a few weeks. She stated this is relevant to the State Trail system because of the 20 million dollar investment for the OCAB which will allow access to users who desire access to a paved trail system. Central and East Bloomington is truly lacking in alternative transportation alternatives and the State Trail is step in the right direction. She noted there is a small group of users (mountain bikers) who oppose a paved trail in

the Minnesota River Valley. She stated the biggest cost associated with the trail is a project the mountain biker group is in favor of and that is a bridge over Nine Mile Creek. She reiterated the approved legislation is for a dual trail and it is not one or the other. She concluded by stating all of the citizens should be served by the trail

Fischer asked Lenczewski to comment on whether flooding has been taken into consideration with the planning for the trail. Lenczewski stated yes. She stated these trails are State Trails and are paid for through state taxes. She stated the DNR has found that maintaining a crushed gravel trail versus a paved trail is significantly more expensive and maintaining a paved trail is more cost effective.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/Willette, S/Fischer: To close the public hearing. Motion carried 5-0.

M/Goodrum, S/Fischer: I move to recommend City Council adoption of the Alternative Transportation Plan Update. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEM 4
6:51 p.m.

CASE:	10000A-15
APPLICANT:	City of Bloomington
REQUEST:	City Code Amendment – 2015 Miscellaneous Issues Ordinance

SPEAKING FOR THE APPLICANT:

Jason Schmidt, Planner

SPEAKING FROM THE PUBLIC:

Craig Trenary (9629 Upton Road)
Janet Cruse (15950 Lundstead Road)

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION:

Schmidt stated the 2015 Miscellaneous Issues Ordinance includes changes to Chapters 2, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21 and 22 of the City Code. He summarized the primary amendments : farm animal shelters, beekeeping (nonresidential), landscape standards – perennial plants, sign regulations – additional signage, sign district for college campuses – include schools (K-12), and directional sign regulations (accent signs).

Schmidt clarified the proposed minor change for farm animal shelters. The proposed language clarifies that the animal shelter cannot be located closer to an adjacent street than the principal structure unless set back at least 50 feet from the property line adjacent to the street.

Schmidt clarified the proposed beekeeping language will allow beekeeping in all non-residential zoning districts as an accessory use, creates a bee and beekeeping definition, and creates beekeeping standards within non-residential zoning districts. Schmidt explained the standards for non-residential districts mimic the standards already existing for residential districts, which includes a requirement for one acre per bee hive (24 cubic feet), setbacks of 100 feet from residentially used lots, setbacks of 150 feet from any dwelling on neighboring lot, setbacks of 50 feet from all other neighboring property lines, and hives cannot be located between the structure and street. It also includes requirements for screening hives on rooftops and ensures that the location of hives does not create nuisance conditions for neighboring properties.

Schmidt explained the changes to the landscaping standards will permit perennial plants to count toward 50 percent of the required planting of shrubs and four perennial plants will equal one shrub.

Schmidt clarified another proposed change will allow more permanent signage in the Class IV and V Sign Districts. He explained the proposed language will allow buildings to have wall signage along any elevation with public exterior entrances.

Schmidt explained the proposed changes will add K-12 schools to the college campus special sign district regulations, which allow additional directional signs and accent signs.

Schmidt stated in Case 10000A-15, staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend City Council approval of the Ordinance as attached to the staff report and amend to include the revised accent sign standards to amend Chapters 2, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21 and 22 of the City Code. Schmidt stated he is available for questions and comments from the Commission.

Goodrum asked staff for clarification on whether school accent signage could be clustered as long as they are placed greater than 30 feet from the property line. Schmidt stated the 200 foot separation requirement for school accent signs is only if the signs are within 30 feet of the property line, so beyond that they could be clustered.

Fischer asked for clarification from staff regarding businesses within the Class IV and V Sign Districts. Schmidt stated the proposed language will allow single tenant and multi-tenant buildings additional wall signage along any elevation with public exterior entrances.

Craig Trenary stated he is a Bloomington resident and has had children that attended Hillcrest School. He stated he has been involved with adding some accent signage at Hillcrest and appreciates being able to work with Schmidt and Pease. He stated he believes Hillcrest will be able to work within the proposed ordinance language to display the signage they are interested in displaying. He asked staff if directional signage could be placed in the public right-of-way. Markegard stated only official signs may be placed in the right of way, so any directional sign would need to be approved by Public Works as a needed official sign. Markegard stated another option would be to discuss vacation of the right of way with Public Works.

Janet Cruse stated she is a teacher at Hillcrest Community School. She stated she is very excited to herald Hillcrest as an Artful Learning School and the only such school in the State of Minnesota. She asked for clarification from staff on the use of support poles for displaying accent signage. Schmidt clarified that some schools have used existing light poles to display signage and some have erected a separate pole to mount the signage. Schmidt explained the property owner has the right to erect its own support poles to display their accent signs as long as the placement meets Code requirements.

The public hearing was closed via a motion.

Goodrum expressed concern that the proposed language could allow a property owner to “cluster” their accent signage which may be unattractive. Schmidt stated the proposed language would ensure accent signs be 200 feet apart if placed within 30 feet of the right-of-way. Goodrum asked if the term *nuisance* is defined in the ordinance. Schmidt stated the term is defined in Chapter 14 of the City Code.

Nordstrom stated this item will be heard at the May 18, 2015 City Council meeting.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/Bennett, S/Fischer: To close the public hearing. Motion carried 5-0.

M/Fischer, S/Willette: I move to recommend the City Council approve the Ordinance as attached to the staff report and amended to include the revised accent sign standards amending Chapters 2, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21, and 22 of the City Code. Motion carried 5-0.

ITEM 5
6:06 p.m.

APPLICANT:	City of Bloomington
REQUEST:	Consider approval of draft Planning Commission meeting synopses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 12, 2015• March 19, 2015

DISCUSSION:

Nordstrom stated consideration of the draft March 12 and March 19 Planning Commission meeting synopses were included in the electronic staff report for approval consideration.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/Willette, S/Fischer: I move to approve the March 12, 2015 Planning Commission meeting synopsis as presented. Motion carried 4-0. (Bennett not voting due to absence at that meeting)

M/Willette, S/Bennett: I move to approve the March 19, 2015 Planning Commission meeting synopsis as presented. Motion carried 4-0. (Fischer not voting due to absence at that meeting)

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Prepared By: MH **Reviewed By:** GM, MC, JS

Approved By Planning Commission: 5/21/15

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